



Russians indicted in 2016 election interference

What the president calls a ‘hoax’ turns out to be real

BY PHILIP RUCKER

The hackers, he suggested, may have been Chinese. Or some 400-pound guy sitting on his bed. Again and again, he insisted, Russian interference was a hoax — a fiction created by Democrats as an excuse for losing an election they should have won.

When Donald Trump finally acknowledged publicly that Russians had hacked Democratic emails and interfered in the 2016

presidential election, the then-president-elect immediately regretted it. He confided to advisers that he did not believe the intelligence. The last thing Trump wanted to do was to endorse the notion that his victory may have been caused by any force other than his own strategy, message and charisma.

“Russia talk is FAKE NEWS put out by the Dems, and played up by the media, in order to mask the

TRUMP CONTINUED ON A13

Key allegations

Thirteen people and three companies are accused of working for a Russian propaganda organization and posing as Americans to support Donald Trump and attack Hillary Clinton during the 2016 presidential campaign. The indictment says the Russians tried to influence the election by:

- Encouraging minority groups in the United States not to vote in 2016 or to vote for a third-party candidate.
- Placing ads on social media and other sites advocating for Trump and opposing Clinton.
- Using a Facebook group and Twitter account to organize two political rallies in New York, “March for Trump” and “Down with Hillary.”
- Paying for an actress to portray Clinton in a prison uniform in a cage on a flatbed truck.

U.S. Department of Justice

Shadow campaign: Inside the Russian effort to affect the election. **A14**

Tenacious trolls: The indictment offers few clues on halting attacks. **A14**

MUELLER CHARGES 13 PEOPLE, 3 COMPANIES

Says operation sought to boost Trump, hurt Clinton

BY DEVLIN BARRETT,
SARI HORWITZ AND
ROSALIND S. HELDERMAN

The Justice Department’s special counsel announced a sweeping indictment Friday of a notorious Russian group of Internet trolls — charging 13 individuals and three companies with a long-running scheme to criminally interfere with the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

The Internet Research Agency,

based in St. Petersburg, was named in the indictment as the hub of an ambitious effort to trick Americans online into following and promoting Russian-fed propaganda that pushed 2016 voters toward then-Republican candidate Donald Trump and away from Democratic rival Hillary Clinton.

The indictment charges that the Russian efforts began in 2014, when three of the Russian con-

RUSSIA CONTINUED ON A13

White House to curb access to secrets

Kelly’s move could hinder Kushner, others with interim clearances

BY SHANE HARRIS,
JOSH DAWSEY,
CAROL D. LEONNIG
AND ROBERT COSTA

White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly announced Friday that beginning next week, the White House will no longer allow some



Jared Kushner has still not been given a full security clearance.

employees with interim security clearances access to top-secret information — a move that could threaten the standing of Jared Kushner, President Trump’s son-in-law.

Kushner, a senior adviser to the president, has been able to see some of the nation’s most sensitive secrets even as his background investigation has dragged on for more than a year.

White House officials have privately discussed concerns that Kushner’s clearance faces obstacles, according to people familiar with internal conversations, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe private talks. Among the potential problems: repeated amendments that he had to make to a form detailing his contacts with foreign officials. Two U.S. officials said they do not expect Kushner to receive a permanent security clearance in the near future, The Washington Post reported last week.

In the meantime, Kushner has maintained an interim clearance that gives him access to top-secret and sensitive compartmented information — a rare level of access to hold for a long period of time, experts said. His elite position has allowed him to meet with foreign officials around the world and read the classified intelligence prepared daily for the president.

A senior administration official with knowledge of Kelly’s thinking said that the chief of staff has been frustrated with Kushner’s high level of access without a final clearance and that he was aware the new policies announced Fri-

KUSHNER CONTINUED ON A15

FBI failed to act on warning about Fla. suspect



MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

Family and friends gather for the funeral of Meadow Pollack at Congregation Kol Tikvah in Parkland, Fla. The 18-year-old was one of 17 people killed when a gunman, identified by police as former student Nikolas Cruz, opened fire at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

Agency received call Jan. 5 about potential for school attack

BY MARK BERMAN
AND MATT ZAPOTOSKY

The FBI ignored a warning that 19-year-old Nikolas Cruz might attack a school, failing to act on a call just weeks before Cruz allegedly carried out a shooting rampage at a high school in South Florida on Valentine’s Day, the bureau said Friday.

The disclosure came two days after police say Cruz gunned down 17 people, most of them teenagers, at a high school in Parkland, Fla. The FBI — already facing intense scrutiny for its handling of political matters — described a Jan. 5 tip from “a person close to Nikolas Cruz,” a tip officials acknowledge should have initiated a response. The caller reported concerns about Cruz’s “gun ownership, desire to kill people, erratic behavior, and disturbing social media posts, as well as the potential of him

FLORIDA CONTINUED ON A16

Heeding ‘red flags’

Some states allow officials to preemptively seize guns. **A18**

Irreplaceable individuals

Friends and loved ones illustrate the victims’ lives. **A17**

A touching finish as Olympian as it gets

In cross-country skiing, the final competitors wait around to hug it out

BY CHUCK CULPEPPER
IN PYEONGCHANG, SOUTH KOREA

Now the Olympics distilled again to maybe their most gasping, writhing finish line, and a Swede crossed, careened rightward and sprawled onto his gut for a good 10 seconds. A Czech crossed, stopped abruptly and toppled. A Norwegian contender churned in under undulating Norwegian flags in Norwegian hands in the stands, spilled and began squirming gently on his belly.

A Swiss arrived in a time torrid for 15 kilometers of cross-country skiing — 33 minutes 43.9 seconds — then realized it would mean a gold medal and began to sob. A South Korean made it to the end of this admirable torture, plopped facedown and rear up, rolled over and kicked his skis a bit with his poles sticking straight up. A Canadian crossed and almost seemed to croak, staying prone while an Australian veered to the right,



FILIP SINGER/EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Tonga’s Pita Taufatofua, right, welcomed Sebastian Uprimny after the Colombian skied in four minutes after him.

then a Greek skier came by, an Iranian, a Bosnian, before finally, haltingly, the Canadian managed to sit, legs splayed.

The clock showed 4:21 p.m. Friday. The public-address announcers continued their near-scream-

OLYMPICS CONTINUED ON A8

More coverage: Lindsey Vonn misses podium in women’s super-G. **D1**

D.C. deputy mayor steps down over favoritism

Top education aide helped chancellor bypass schools lottery

BY PERRY STEIN
AND PETER JAMISON

The top education aide to D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) resigned Friday after helping the public schools chancellor bypass the city’s notoriously competitive lottery system and secure a coveted slot for his teenage daughter at a top high school.

The lottery system, used to place students in the District’s traditional public and charter schools, is intended to ensure that all families have an equal shot at the best schools. But it has been a long-standing source of tension and was engulfed in scandal less than a year ago

when investigators discovered that a previous chancellor allowed well-connected parents and government officials to skirt lottery rules.

The resignation of Deputy Mayor for Education Jennifer Niles was immediate. Niles’s chief of staff, Ahnna Smith, was named interim deputy mayor.

Friday’s revelation emerged as the D.C. Public Schools struggled to address a separate crisis involving high school graduation, and it threatened to further erode public confidence in a school system heralded as a model of urban education.

Bowser disclosed that the transfer of Schools Chancellor Antwan Wilson’s daughter had broken a policy banning preferential treatment for the children of government officials that the chancellor wrote just months earlier. When his family decided the school attended by his oldest

TRANSFER CONTINUED ON A8

IN SUNDAY’S POST



MALIKA FAVRE

« **Stepping up** Furious and heartbroken in the Trump era, women across the nation are entering the political fray for the first time. Many have turned to Emerge America, a national nonprofit that trains Democratic women to run for elective office. For a recent class of these political novices, enthusiasm and expectations clash with reality. **Magazine**



MARVIN JOSEPH/THE WASHINGTON POST

« **The Ava effect** Director Ava DuVernay is making history in an industry long ruled by white men with the \$100 million “A Wrinkle in Time.” And she wants much more. **Arts & Style**

You’re going where?

A vibrant arts and culture scene makes for an energizing treasure hunt in Indianapolis. **Travel**

INSIDE

REAL ESTATE A good year for luxury

Sales of high-end homes flourished in the Washington area last year, with three of the top 10 most expensive houses being bought by Trump administration officials.

THE NATION USS Cole case halted

A military judge suspends a death penalty case linked to the 2000 bombing, dealing a setback to the already troubled military court system at Guantanamo. **A2**

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